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NUCLEAR TARGETING POLICY REVIEW

Summary

The study of nuclear targeting policy seeks to evaluate nuclear weapon employment policy, to identify alternatives to the current policy, and to make recommendations where appropriate.

While the report acknowledges that our deterrent appears adequate under normal circumstances, it suggests that the Soviet emphasis on fighting, surviving, and winning a nuclear war requires more flexibility in US nuclear options. It finds deficiencies in current US plans and capabilities to carry out escalation control, inadequate political guidance in nuclear option planning and inadequate practicing of option execution. It finds that although targeting to impede Soviet recovery receives the highest priority [REDACTED] this may not be the most effective deterrent. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The report concludes that US damage limiting capabilities have declined substantially and suggests that we need to determine how much and what kind of hard target capability (HTC) we need. The report also finds that under current plans:

- attacks against Soviet non-nuclear military forces are likely to be ineffective;
- C³ I capabilities may need to survive for months, but ours could not today;
- our deterrence and escalation control objectives require an effective NATO employment policy;
- there are no US ICBM LUA plans;
- the current SIOP targeting policy for China is out of date.

Four major policy alternatives are suggested for consideration:

1. To strengthen current policy, particularly by improving the flexibility of plans and the endurance of forces and their related C³ I.

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2. To focus both employment and declaratory policy more heavily on denying the Soviets any confidence of achieving a favorable war outcome (more expensive than #1);
3. To seek a higher confidence capability to limit damage (very expensive);
4. To move in the other direction from current policy and rely more heavily on assured destruction.

The report does not recommend any one of these alternatives, although it believes that the last two are clearly undesirable. It does not explicitly evaluate the option of keeping our present policies.

The report does recommend:

- Greater SIOP flexibility to attack only parts of the USSR through the development of more discrete executable building blocks. Also, improved planning for non-SIOP options.
- Making endurance a high priority for future US forces and C³ I planning.
- Targeting Soviet nuclear forces and developing our forces so as to maintain roughly equal counter-force capabilities throughout a war.
- New priorities for targeting Soviet non-nuclear forces.

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- Closer coordination of US and NATO nuclear planning.
- Development of LUA package for Minuteman.
- Less extensive planning for China than for the USSR.
- A continuing interaction between policy makers and planners on nuclear employment policy.

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- Improved NATO deterrence by SACEUR being able to cover all his targets without resort to the SIOP.

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